

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 /073 W

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P R 301850Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 443

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMCONSUL BRODEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, FR, PINT  
SUBJECT: FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY (PCF) SECRETARY-  
GENERAL'S NINETY TELEVISION MINUTES

SUMMARY. PCF SECRETARY-GENERAL GEORGES MARCHAIS GAVE A 90-MINUTE INTERVIEW TO FOUR FIRST NETWORK REPORTERS ON APRIL 29. MOST OBSERVERS-- INCLUDING SOME COMMUNISTS -- FOUND THE PERFORMANCE TO BE ONE OF HIS POOREST TO DATE. HIS HECTORING TONE, "FORMULA" ANSWERS AND THE APPEARANCE HE GAVE OF DUCKING ON A NUMBER OF HARD QUESTIONS WILL NOT REASSURE MANY FRENCH VOTERS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE STYLE IS THE SUBSTANCE: POLITICAL HUMORISTS LIKE TO REMIND THE FRENCH THAT MARCHAIS IS AN EXPERT AT SETTING THE PUBLIC MOOD. WHEN HE WANTS TO REASSURE THE FRENCH VOTER, HE BECOMES THE AVUNCULAR, JOVIAL AND GENTLE "UNCLE GEORGES." HIS APRIL 29 INTERVIEW PUT THE OTHER MARCHAIS INTO THE PUBLIC EYE: HE LECTURED THE REPORTERS, HIS OUT-THRUST FOREFINGER WAGGING, ABOUT THE CHANGES IN THE COMMUNIST PARTY. "IT WAS", SAID ONE PCF OFFICIAL, "THE OLD MARCHAIS GIVING AN UNCONVINCING READING OF THE NEW LINE."

2. NATIONAL DEFENSE - NO CLARIFICATION ON THE FORCE DE FRAPPE: COMMENTING ON THE SUGGESTION THAT RECENT STATEMENTS BY PCF DEFENSE EXPERT LOUIS BAILLOT HAVE AMOUNTED TO A TACIT PCF ENDORSEMENT OF THE FORCE DE FRAPPE, AMARCHAIS

- REITERATED THE PCF'S OPPOSITION TO NUCLEAR ARMS;
- REMINDED HIS LISTENERS OF THE PCF'S "STRUGGLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT, GENERALIZED DISARMAMENT AND THE DISOLUTION OF BLOCS;"
- REAFFIRMED THE PCF'S COMMITMENT TO AN "ALL AZIMUTHS" DEFENSE CAPABILITY FOR FRANCE (IN THE PROCESS, MARCHAIS RENDERED A TRIBUTE TO DE GAULLE FOR HAVING ASSURED BOTH THE INDEPENDENCE AND THE SECURITY OF FRANCE BY HAVING WITHDRAWN FRANCE FROM NATO);
- ACCUSED GISCARD OF HAVING RE-INTEGRATED FRANCE

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- INTO NATO "UNDER THE TUTELAGE OF THE UNITED STATES;"
- LINKED THE ALLEGED RE-INTEGRATION TO THE DANGER OF INTERVENTION BY "AMERICAN AND WEST GERMAN AUTHORITIES" IN FRENCH AFFAIRS;
- SUGGESTED THAT FRENCH SECURITY MIGHT BE WELL SERVED, "FOR EXAMPLE, BY A NON-AGGRESSION TREATY WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHER COUN-

TRIES."

ABSENT FROM MARCHAIS' RESPONSE WAS ANY CLARIFICATION OF THE PCF'S VIEWS OF FRANCE'S NUCLEAR CAPABILITY. SPECIFICALLY ASKED IF HE UNDERSTOOD A FRENCH "ALL AZIMUTHS" DEFENSE TO IMPLY THE USE OF SSBNS, MARCHAIS DID NOT ANSWER.

3. PROTESTS AGAINST "FOREIGN INTERFERENCE": MARCHAIS MADE A POINT OF PROTESTING, AT LEAST TWICE IN THE TELECAST, TO "INTERVENTIONS COMING FROM ABROAD IN FRENCH AFFAIRS." NAMING SPECIFICALLY THE PRESIDENT, THE SECRETARY AND GENERAL HAIG, HE ALSO ACCUSED FRG'S BRANDT AND SCHMIDT OF HAVING "LEARNED NOTHING FROM HISTORY." WHILE THERE WAS NOTHING NEW IN HIS VIEW OF THE US, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT MARCHAIS HAS DIRECTLY ATTACKED HELMUT SCHMIDT AND WILLY BRANDT.

4. RELATIONS WITH THE CPSU -- THE PCF IS UNITED: MARCHAIS WAS CAREFUL TO STATE THAT THE PCF IS UNITED ON THE "DIVERGENCIES" WHICH SEPARATE ITS VIEW OF CURRENT POLITICAL REALITY FROM THAT OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION. WHILE OFFERING NOW NEW ELEMENTS OF PCF THINKING, MARCHAIS OBVIOUSLY WANTED TO LAY TO REST THE RUMORS WHICH HAVE HIM PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BREAK -- IF THERE IS A BREAK -- WITH THE CPSU. INSTEAD, HE PRESENTED HIS VIEWERS WITH A PICTURE OF A MODERN PCF IN DISAGREEMENT WITH A CPSU PERHAPS STILL FOCUSED ON THE EXPERIENCE OF 1917.

5. COMMENT: MARCHAIS' PERFORMANCE GOT BAD REVIEWS FROM SOME PCF OFFICIALS WHO WERE DISAPPOINTED THAT THE SECRETARY-GENERAL HAD BROKEN NO NEW GROUND.  
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WITH 90 MINUTES OF PRIME TIME AVAILABLE TO HIM, MARCHAIS MIGHT HAVE CHOSEN TO CLARIFY PARTY POSITIONS ON REFORMS, ON DEFENSE AND ON RELATIONS WITH THE SOCIALISTS. HE CHOSE INSTEAD TO SERVE UP YET ANOTHER READING OF THE PCF'S "NEW", POST TWENTY-SECOND CONGRESS LINE AND HE DID IT IN AN OLD-FASHIONED WAY. BY STUDIOUSLY AVOIDING EITHER A REPUDIATION OR AN EXPLICIT APPROVAL OF THE TACIT ACCEPTANCE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS FOR FRANCE ATTRIBUTED TO LOUIS BAILLOT, MARCHAIS LEFT THE DOOR OPEN FOR AN EXPLICIT PCF APPROVAL OF A FRENCH NUCLEAR FORCE. HE MIGHT HAVE CHOSEN TO CLOSE IT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LANGUAGE OF THE 1972 COMMON PROGRAM. THAT HE DID NOT MAY REFLECT A STRATEGY WHICH MORE AND MORE SEEKS TO USE NEO-GAULLIST RHETORIC ON DEFENSE TO CLOTHE COMMUNIST POSITIONS.

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